

Message Text

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SUBJECT: US-USSR TRADE: RECENT PRESS COVERAGE

USDOC/FOR BEWT

1. TWO RECENT ARTICLES IN CENTRAL PRESS GIVE INFUSION OF
OPTIMISM TO OFFICIAL SOVIET LINE ON PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER
CLOSENING OF US-USSR TRADE TIES. FIRST IS BRIEF PIECE IN
DEC 24 PRAVDA REPORTING ON MOSCOW VISIT OF HAROLD SCOTT,
PRESIDENT OF US-USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL. SECOND IS
RATHER LENGTHY INTERVIEW WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
HENRY TURNER, HELD DURING HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW AS LEADER OF
EXECUTIVE LEVEL TRADE MISSION AND PUBLISHED IN DEC 26
SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA.

2. PRAVDA ARTICLE QUOTES SCOTT AS "VERY OPTIMISTICALLY"
EVALUATING PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADING COOPERATION
WITH USSR AND AS SAYING THAT RECENT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION
AGAINST MFN AND CREDITS WILL MEAN, IN FIRST INSTANCE, BLOW
TO AMERICAN ECONOMY. WHILE ROAD TO MFN IS STILL LONG,
HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO SCOTT, "WE ARE SURE THAT THE PRESIDENT
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WILL NOT SIGN ANY LEGISLATION WHICH DOES NOT CORRESPOND

TO HIS POSITIONS AND INTENTIONS TO DEVELOP TRADE TIES WITH
THE SOVIET UNION."

3. TURNER INTERVIEW, IN MUCH THE SAME VEIN, POINTS TO
CURRENT FAVORABLE STATE OF US-USSR BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS,
OFFERING AS PROOF "AGREEMENTS" REACHED BY SEVERAL
AMERICAN COMPANIES DURING EXECUTIVE LEVEL TRADE MISSION
(SPECIFICALLY DEERE AND CO., UNIROYAL, AND RCA) FOR SUPPLY
OF EQUIPMENT IN NEAR FUTURE TO USSR.

4. COMMENT: PUBLICATION OF TURNER INTERVIEW AT THIS LATE
DATE--COMING AFTER HOUSE VOTE ON TRADE BILL-IS SOMEWHAT
CURIOS SINCE HIS STATEMENTS SEEM SOMEWHAT LESS AUTHORITATIVE
NOW THAN THEY ONCE MIGHT HAVE. HE IS QUOTED, FOR EXAMPLE,
AS SEEING "REAL POSSIBILITIES" FOR GRANTING OF MFN AND AS
STATING THAT PRESIDENT NIXON AND HIS ADMIISTRATION ARE
ACHIEVING PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION ASSURING SOLUTION OF THIS
PROBLEM, LEGISLATION PROVIDING NOT ONLY FOR MFN BUT FOR
CREDITS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR EXPANSION OF MUTUAL TRADE.

5. THIS END-OF-YEAR PRESS COVERAGE OF BILATERAL TRADE
SCENE IS CLEAR--IF SOMEWHAT FORCED--EFFORT TO SUSTAIN
MOMENTUM OF PITCH BUILT UP DURING YEAR, CULMINATING IN
SHULTZ VISIT IN OCTOBER, BUT BADLY DEFLATED SINCE THEN
WITH HOUSE TYING OF MFN AND CREDITS TO IMMIGRATION
QUESTION. SOVIETS, IN FACT, ARE PUTTING BEST GLOSS
POSSIBLE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS OF MFN AND CREDITS. FURTHER
INDICATION OF THIS ATTITUDE IS PUBLICATION IN DEC 26 PRAVDA
OF INTERVIEW WITH SENATOR FULBRIGHT IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED
HOPE FOR OVERCOMING RECENT DIFFEICULTIES IN AREA OF US-
USSR TRADE TIES (I.E., HOUSE ACTION ON MFN AND CREDITS)
SINCE "TRADE DEVELOPMENT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE FURTHER
NORMALIZATION OF SOVIET-AMERICAN RELATIONS."SOMMERLATTE

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